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POLITICAL BUZZ

Friday, August 21, 2009 - Tacoma, WA

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Political Buzz

Let's talk politics.

Wednesday, August 12th, 2009

More on PDC precedence on not requiring full disclosure

Posted by **Peter Callaghan** @ 02:20:34 pm

During the discussion of the request by proponents of Referendum 71 to keep secret the names of donors to the campaign, I brought up the last time a similar request was made.

That was in 1994, also surrounding a ballot proposition dealing with gay rights. That year, two initiatives that sought to ban passage of laws giving civil rights protections to gays and lesbians were on the ballot. Opponents, calling themselves Hands Off Washington, asked the PDC for an exemption from disclosure rules.

Opponents were willing to disclose the names and amounts given by donors. But they opposed a recent PDC rule requiring that the occupations and employers of donors also be listed. In January, the PDC passed a temporary exemption – timed to give the Legislature time to address the issue.

The exemption was repealed six weeks later when the Legislature failed to act. Opponents of those initiatives claimed the extra information could lead to harassment and discrimination against donors.

In 1995, the Legislature passed a law eliminating the requirement that donors' occupations and employers be listed. That section, however, was vetoed by then-Gov. Mike Lowry.

Now it is the other side of the issue seeking exemptions from disclosure. Backers of R-71, which would repeal recently passed gay partnership laws, have already succeeded in getting the names of those who signed the referendum sealed. They now seek to have all information about campaign donors sealed as well.

The PDC will meet August 27 to discuss the request.

Categories: [Legislature](#), [Campaign news](#), [Initiatives and Referenda](#), [Open Government](#) • [2 comments](#)

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mjday @ 16:08 - Wednesday, August 12th, 2009 ✓

Let me try to understand this: the people who were asking for disclosure of names in 1994 are now requesting non-disclosure. And also, the people who didn't want disclosure of their names then want full disclosure now, when the positions are reversed.

This may be an argument for the anti-disclosure position. The threat of intimidation was felt by both sides equally. The fear of retribution is not a partisan issue.

lifterlady @ 06:06 - Sunday, August 16th, 2009 ✓

It might be interesting to note that in 1994 it was perfectly legal to fire someone from their job or kick them out of their apartment with the sole reason that they were believed to be gay.

The initiatives Peter mentions in 1994 would have enacted additional discriminatory measures against lesbian and gay people.

While it's probably right that everyone has to report everything, there's a much stronger link for why those 1994 campaigns didn't want to report employers. Those donor lists could and would have been used as the map for targeting and firing people.

In the end, reporting is a good thing for transparency. Voters should know who's supporting what campaigns. If real threats arise from reporting, law enforcement should be involved.

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